

Harold D. Lasswell

## WHY BE QUANTITATIVE?

The point of view of this book is that the study of politics can be advanced by the quantitative analysis of political discourse. Why be quantitative? In reply, it is perhaps appropriate to bring out the limitations of qualitative analysis in terms of the work of the present writer.

At the end of World War I, research on politically significant communication was almost entirely qualitative, consisting in the discovery and illustration of propaganda themes and their use. When the present writer described the propaganda of World War I in *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (1927)<sup>1</sup> he took note of certain common themes running through the propaganda of all belligerent powers. The themes were:

The enemy is a menace.

(German militarism threatens us all.)

We are protective.

(We protect ourselves and others.)

The enemy is obstructive.

(They block our future aims.)

We are helpful.

(We aid in the achievement of positive goals.)

The enemy is immoral and insolent.

(They violate legal and moral standards and they hold everyone else in contempt.)

We are moral and appreciative.

(We conform to moral and legal standards and we respect others.)

The enemy will be defeated.

We will win.

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<sup>1</sup> Kegan Paul, London, and Knopf, New York, 1927; reprinted by Peter Smith, New York, 1938.

The book was organized to show the form taken by these themes when domestic, allied or enemy audiences were addressed. The chapter on "The Illusion of Victory" showed what was told the home audience on the themes, "The enemy will be defeated," "We will win." The chapter on "Satanism" described how the self was presented as "moral" and "appreciative" while the enemy was "immoral" and "insolent." The "menacing" and "obstructive" rôle of the enemy and our own "protective" and "helpful" activity were illustrated in the chapter on "War Guilt and War Aims." Special attention was paid to "preserving friendship" (of allies and neutrals) and "demoralizing the enemy." Each chapter was composed of excerpts selected chiefly from the propaganda of the United States, Great Britain, Germany and France.

Although none of the criteria which guided the choice of quotations is stated in the book, it is obvious that some selections were made because they clearly stated a theme or developed a theme in detail. No doubt these criteria justified the citation of the extended account of alleged Entente violations of international law which had been compiled by Dr. Ernst Müller-Meiningen (pp. 85-86). In some cases, the wide dissemination of the material was no doubt a selective factor, notably in the case of *J'accuse!*, an exposé of Germany by Richard Grelling (p. 54). Sometimes the eminence of the speaker appears to have been the deciding factor, as with the Bryce report on alleged atrocities perpetrated by the Germans in Belgium (p. 19). In certain instances, the excerpt was a sample of what was distributed by (or to) a professional, vocation, educational or other special group (pp. 70 ff.).

No evidence is given in the book that all the material studied by the author was examined with the same degree of care. We are not informed whether the author actually read or glanced through all the copies of the principal mass-circulation newspapers, periodicals, books and pamphlets of Germany and other countries; or whether he read British, French and American material as fully as German.

Of course, the study did not purport to be an exhaustive history of propaganda during the war. It was called an essay in technique, and the hope was expressed that it would have some influence in directing professional historians toward the study of propaganda, and that the scheme of classification would prove helpful in the organization of future research. The book was to some extent successful in both objectives. Research on war propaganda, as indeed on every phase of propaganda, went forward with vigor, many monographs growing out of the original essay or attributing some degree of influence to it.<sup>2</sup>

Among the most comprehensive books on the propaganda of World

<sup>2</sup> See Ralph Haswell Lutz, "Studies of War Propaganda, 1914-33," *Journal of Modern History*, 5: 496-516 (December, 1933).

War II was the work of George G. Bruner, *Empire in 1918*, a magazine and Reich archives at Stanford University.

Whenever the book is used by these writers, it is by these writers. War. Excerpts from the book are used by the public and the writer. The criteria of choice are the same as in the earlier work. It is more than the first book and employed the same criteria on the relationship on the relationship.

The results, however, are many relevant ones. He read his sources and he allow his eyes to see the parliamentary documents in his bibliography. The pages are superficial and the sampling system is comparable with the chosen simply because they were they genuine propaganda leaflets?

The very fact of the certain lack of a history of war has been made no effort to illustrate a specific channel, or to a given audience. The same number of read for France explored with the dates were single.

The limitations of the book are to follow.

<sup>3</sup> Cotta'sche Buchhandlung  
<sup>4</sup> Stanford University

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War II was those of Hans Thimme, *Weltkrieg ohne Waffen* (1932)<sup>3</sup>, and George G. Bruntz, *Allied Propaganda and the Collapse of the German Empire in 1918* (1938)<sup>4</sup>. Both historians explored archives of newspaper, magazine and other source material, the first relying chiefly upon the Reich archives and the second utilizing the Hoover War Library at Stanford University.

Whenever the propaganda message was described, the method adopted by these writers was similar to that of *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. Excerpts were chosen to illustrate what was circulated to different publics and what themes were used. The authors left unspecified their criteria of choice, although these were obviously similar to those of the earlier work. In many respects these monographs are more satisfactory than the first book, since the authors made use of new source material, and employed to advantage the accumulated results of historical scholarship on the relative importance of persons, channels and symbols in the war.

The results, however, can not be accepted as in all respects satisfactory; many relevant questions remain unanswered. Can we assume that a scholar read his sources with the same degree of care throughout this research? Did he allow his eye to travel over the thousands upon thousands of pages of parliamentary debates, newspapers, magazines and other sources listed in his bibliography or notes? Or did he use a sampling system, scanning some pages superficially, though concentrating upon certain periods? Was the sampling system for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, if one was employed, comparable with the one for the *Manchester Guardian*? Were the leaflets chosen simply because they were conveniently available to the scholar, or were they genuinely representative of the most widely circulated propaganda leaflets?

The very fact that such questions can be raised at all points to a certain lack of method in presenting and conducting research on the history of war propaganda. In all of the books to which reference has been made no explicit justification was given of most of the excerpts chosen to illustrate a specific theme, to characterize the content of any particular channel, or to describe the propaganda directed toward or reaching any given audience. It is impossible to determine from the final report whether the same number or a comparable number of mass circulation media were read for France as for England or Germany, or whether publications were explored with the same degree of intensity at all dates, or whether certain dates were singled out for intensive note-taking.

The limitations of these monographs are apparent when anyone undertakes to follow a particular theme through various periods, channels and

<sup>3</sup> Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, Stuttgart and Berlin.

<sup>4</sup> Stanford University Press, Stanford.



audiences. We know that every belligerent used "war aim" propaganda. But suppose we want to find the degree of emphasis laid upon war aims from period to period. Or assume that we ask how they differed when presented to the upper, middle or lower classes of the home population, or to neutral, ally or enemy. Was the war aim propaganda more prominent in the magazines than in the pamphlets, or the reverse? The same questions apply to every theme.

To some extent, historians of war propaganda have sought to reduce ambiguity by multiplying the number of subperiods described within the whole period. Walter Zimmerman studied the English press from the time of Sarajevo to the entry of England into the war, selecting thirty daily newspapers, eight Sunday papers, nine weeklies, four monthlies and two quarterlies, intending to cover all the important regional and social groups in Great Britain.<sup>5</sup> Even in this period, however, we can not be certain of the criteria used in selecting quotations. It is obvious that Zimmerman does not summarize all thirty daily papers every day, but we are left in the dark about why he quotes one paper one day or week and omits it the next time. Even if we assume that his judgment is good, it is permissible to ask if such arbitrary selection procedures create a properly balanced picture, or whether they result in special pleading based, if not on deliberate deception, then on unconscious bias.

The same problem remains in the detailed monograph by Friederike Recktenwald, in which she restricts herself to a single set of themes having to do with British war aims.<sup>6</sup> Miss Recktenwald divides the course of the war into subperiods, and reproduces or summarizes material from the British press having to do with war aims. Although this procedure gives us a plausible indication of the relative amount of attention paid to war aims at different times, not all reasonable doubts are allayed. She follows no consistent scheme of reporting. During any given subperiod only a few quotations may be reproduced; yet this may not invariably mean that there was less war-aim news or diminished editorial prominence. It may signify no more than that what was said is less interesting to the historian because the style is less vivid and quotable. We can not rely upon Miss Recktenwald's excerpts to be true samples of the total stream of news and comment reaching the British public, or even of any particular newspaper, or group of newspapers. The moment we ask clear questions that call for reliable bases of comparison, the arbitrary and dubious character of the monograph is apparent.

It is possible, however, to find studies of great technical excellence.

<sup>5</sup> *Die Englische Presse zum Ausbruch des Weltkrieges*, Verlag "Hochschule und Ausland," Charlottenburg, 1928.

<sup>6</sup> *Kriegsziele und öffentliche Meinung Englands, 1914-16*, W. Köhlhammer, Stuttgart, 1929.

In matters of systematic definition a century to *A Study of Public* by George Carslake Thompson. This admirable work, a series of terms for the first time defined. These terms are considered in the first of the four thick volumes. One part of the work is applied by the British public to the standards were "international." Thompson pointed out that such a public's conception of England's standards these ranged all the way from the European or Asiatic great powers.

In applying these standards to certain broad motives—"sentimentalism" among the members of the British foreign policy. At any given time between Russia and Turkey—the public "notions") were fused in the public in 1876 were classified as "Legalism," "Anti-Russianism" and "related to corresponding policies" connected with "emancipation," "Anti-Turkism" each successive phase of England's policy toward Turkey, and copiously illustrated by publications.

Thompson's treatise is noteworthy for its abstractions with exhaustive data. One of all the admirable intellectual achievements of the treatise does not yield maximum results. The problem of sampling, recording and analyzing. Hence, the entire foundation of the treatise divides the five years with which the first phase, some predominant characteristic of the period, third phase," from the year 1876 to the Servian declaration of war, "period," which in turn is divided into three periods. Thompson narrates the stream of quotations that impress him as important, but because they bear upon the analysis (standards, conception of the period). However, the critical reader is still justified in questioning the representativeness of the quotations. H.

<sup>7</sup> Macmillan, London, 2 vols., 1886.



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In matters of systematic definition and historic detail, we can go back half a century to *A Study of Public Opinion and Lord Beaconsfield, 1875-1880*, by George Carslake Thompson (1886).<sup>7</sup> At the beginning of that remarkable work, a series of terms for the analysis of public opinion is carefully defined. These terms are consistently applied throughout the two fact-stuffed volumes. One part of the analytical scheme names the standards applied by the British public on foreign policy questions. Among the standards were "international law," "interest," "morality," and "taste." Thompson pointed out that such standards were applied according to the public's conception of England's rôle in relation to other nations, and that these ranged all the way from "England as an island" to "England as a European or Asiatic great power."

In applying these standards and conceptions, Thompson distinguished certain broad motives—"sentimental" or "diplomatic"—that were operating among the members of the British public in their basic orientation toward foreign policy. At any given time—for instance, at the outbreak of war between Russia and Turkey—these standards, conceptions and motivations (public "notions") were fused into public "views." The views of the British public in 1876 were classified as "Anti-Turkism," "Anti-war," "Order," "Legalism," "Anti-Russianism and Philo-Turkism." Such views in turn were related to corresponding policies. In this way, "Anti-Turkism" was bracketed with "emancipation," "Anti-war" with "isolation." The book described each successive phase of England's reaction to the war between Russia and Turkey, and copiously illustrated every move by excerpts from a list of publications.

Thompson's treatise is noteworthy for the unification of carefully defined abstractions with exhaustive data from the sources. Nevertheless, the outcome of all the admirable intelligence and industry that went into this treatise does not yield maximum results, because of a basic failure: the problem of sampling, recording and summarizing sources was not resolved. Hence, the entire foundation of the work rests on shaky ground. Thompson divides the five years with which he deals into subperiods, according to some predominant characteristic. One such subperiod is the "incubation period, third phase," from the opening of the Parliamentary Session of 1876 to the Servian declaration of war. This is followed by the "atrocities period," which in turn is divided into several parts. For each subperiod, Thompson narrates the stream of events and selects from the sources the quotations that impress him as important not only because they are conspicuous, but because they bear some relationship to his systematic scheme of analysis (standards, conceptions, motivations, views and policies). However, the critical reader is still justified in remaining skeptical of the representativeness of the quotations. He can not be sure why they impressed the

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*Journal of Political and  
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More exact methods give us a means of clarifying certain categories that have been at the root of many past evils in the work of historians and social scientists. For a century, controversy has raged over the relative weight of "material" and "ideological" factors in the social and political process. This controversy has been sterile of scientific results, though the propaganda resonance of "dialectical materialism" has been enormous.

Insofar as sterility can be attributed to technical factors in the domain of scholarship, the significant factor is failure to deal adequately with "ideological" elements. The usual account of how material and ideological factors interact upon one another leaves the process in a cloud of mystery. It is as though you put people in an environment called material—and presto!—their ideas change in a predictable way; and if they do not, the failure is ascribed to an ideological lag of some kind. But the relations, though assumed, are not demonstrated. So far as the material dimensions are concerned, operational methods have been worked out to describe them; not so with the ideological. We are amply equipped to describe such "material" changes as fluctuations in output or amount of machinery employed in production; but we can not match this part of the description with equally precise ways of describing the ideological. The result is that the historical and social sciences have been making comparisons between patterns, only a few of which are handled with precision. The other dimensions remain wholly qualitative, impressionistic and conjectural.<sup>11</sup>

We have undertaken to clear up some of the confusion that has long beset the analysis of "environment" by introducing basic distinctions: the first between the "attention frame" and "surroundings," and the second between the "media frame" and the "non-media frame." The attention frame or "milieu" is the part of an environment reaching the focus of attention of a person or group; the surroundings do not reach the focus. The media frame is composed of the signs coming to the focus of attention (the press which is actually read, for instance). The non-media frame includes the features of an environment that, although not signs, reach attention, such as conspicuous buildings, or persons. Whether any given set of surrounding does affect the structure of attention is to be settled by observing the phenomena, not by assumption.

The fundamental nature of these relations is evident when we reflect upon the requirements for a scientific explanation of response. Two sets of factors are involved: the environment and predispositions. R (response) is a function, in the mathematical sense, of E (environment) and P (premarized in Quincy Wright, *A Study of War*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2 vols., 1942. Note especially Chapter XXX.

<sup>11</sup> See Harold D. Lasswell, "Communications Research and Politics," in *Print Radio, and Film in a Democracy*, edited by Douglas Waples, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1942, pp. 101-117.



disposition); and we have shown that the part of the environment immediately affecting response is what comes to the focus of attention (the attention frame). Information about surroundings is pertinent only to the degree to which it can be shown that the surroundings determine attention. In deciding whether any feature of the environment comes to the focus, it is necessary to demonstrate that a minimum (the threshold level) has been elicited. We do not consider that radio programs which are blacked out by static have come to the attention of an audience. A threshold level has not been reached. (The threshold is not part of the R in the formula of explanation used above; only changes above the threshold are called "effects"—response to what is brought into the attention field.)

The procedures of "content analysis" of communication are appropriate to the problem of describing the structure of attention in quantitative terms.<sup>12</sup> Before entering upon technicalities, it may be pointed out that quantitative ways of describing attention serve many practical, as well as scientific, purposes. *Anticipating the enemy* is one of the most crucial and tantalizing problems in the conduct of war. The intelligence branch of every staff or operations agency is matching wits with the enemy. The job is to out-guess the enemy, to foretell his military, diplomatic, economic and propaganda moves before he makes them, and to estimate where attack would do him the most harm. A principal source of information is what the enemy disseminates in his media of communication.

The Global War introduced a new source of information about the enemy—radio broadcasts under his supervision. When the enemy speaks to his home population, it is possible to listen in. We overhear what the enemy says to his allies, to neutrals and to his enemies. At the outbreak of the Global War, belligerent governments set monitors to work, listening, recording and summarizing the output of enemy and enemy-controlled stations. In Great Britain a group connected with the British Broadcasting Corporation subjected this enormous body of material to systematic examination and began forecasting Nazi policy. These estimates have since been restudied.<sup>13</sup> The same procedures have also been applied to the press

<sup>12</sup> For a review of the research situation at the outbreak of the war (1939), consult Douglas Waples, Bernard Berelson, and Franklyn R. Bradshaw *What Reading Does to People*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1940. More recent developments are noted in Harold D. Lasswell, "Content Analysis," in Bruce L. Smith, Harold D. Lasswell and Ralph D. Casey, *Propaganda, Communication and Public Opinion*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1946. (Modified from Document II, Experimental Division for the Study of Wartime Communications, Library of Congress, 1942.)

<sup>13</sup> Ernst Kris, Hans Speier and Associates, *German Radio Propaganda; Report on Home Broadcasts During the War*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1944. See also *Propaganda by Short Wave*, edited by Harwood L. Childs and John B. Whitton, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1942; and the valuable essay by Charles Siepmann, *Radio in Wartime*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1942. A survey of the situation in 1939 is by Thomas Grandin, *The Political Use of Radio*, Geneva Research Centre, Geneva, 1939; for a later period, Arno Huth *Radio Today; The Present State of Broadcasting in the*

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and to every other channel of communication. The full plan of the enemy often appears only when the entire stream of communication is interpreted as a whole.

As we improve our methods of describing public attention and response, our results become more useful for another practical purpose—the *detecting of political propaganda*. During World War II, the U. S. Department of Justice employed objective propaganda analysis to expose and prosecute enemy agents, like the Transocean Information Service (Nazi-controlled) and “native Fascists.” The Federal Communications Commission described in Court the Axis themes recognized by experts who monitored and analyzed short-wave broadcasts emanating from Germany, Japan and Italy. Objective procedures had been applied in discovering these themes. Objective procedures were also used to analyze the periodicals published by the defendants, and to reveal the parallels between them and the themes disseminated by Axis propagandists.<sup>14</sup>

Quite apart from the use of legal action, it is important that members of the public be informed of the behavior of those with access to the channels of communication. In deciding how much we can rely upon a given newspaper, it is important to know if that newspaper ceases to attack Russia when Germany and Russia sign a non-aggression pact, and then returns to the attack as soon as Germany and Russia fall apart. Under these conditions, we have grounds for inferring a pro-German propaganda policy. By studying the news, editorial and feature material in a medium of communication under known German control, we can check on this inference. We may find that the two media distribute praise and blame in the same way among public leaders and the political parties; and that they take the same stand on domestic and foreign issues. If so, our inference is strengthened that the channel is dominated by pro-German policies.<sup>15</sup>

*World*, Geneva Research Centre, Geneva, 1942. Concerning the news and documentary film, the most penetrating inquiry to date, is by Siegfried Kracauer, *Propaganda and the Nazi War Film*, Museum of Modern Art Film Library, New York, 1942.

<sup>14</sup> *United States of America vs. William Dudley Pelley* (and others), tried in the U. S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, Indianapolis Division, summer, 1942; conviction affirmed on appeal to the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals, Southern Circuit, October Term, 1942. A writ of certiorari denied by the U. S. Supreme Court. Government witnesses included Harold N. Graves, Jr., of the Federal Communications Commission, and Harold D. Lasswell.

<sup>15</sup> The historians of literature have relied upon quantitative analysis as one of the chief means at their disposal in the many “detection” problems that confront them. They must detect corrupt texts, decide among competing attributions of authorship, arrive at the true order in which works were composed, determine the sources relied upon by the author and the influences affecting authorship. As Yule points out, the technique of word-counting goes back many centuries, at least to the “Masoretes,” who, after the destruction of the Jewish state, A.D. 70, devoted themselves to preserving the text of the Bible and the correct manner of pronunciation. It is curious to see that, despite the ease and amount of word-counting, first-class statisticians have only begun to concern themselves with the problems involved—notably G. Udny Yule, *The Statistical Study of*



In the preceding paragraphs, we have said that policy may be served by objective procedures used to anticipate the enemy and to detect propaganda. Also, as scientific knowledge increases, the possibility of control improves; hence, a third contribution of objective research to policy is skill.<sup>16</sup> Skill is the most economical utilization of available means to attain a goal. Appraisals of skill are among the most difficult judgments to establish on a convincing basis, since they depend upon exhaustive knowledge of concrete circumstances and of scientific relations. To say that A is more skillful than B in a given situation is to allow for all factors being "equal." It is not easy to demonstrate that the two sets of environing and predispos-

*Literary Vocabulary*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Eng., 1944. Although word-counting is involved in the study of communication, not all quantitative procedures are necessarily "content analysis." This term can legitimately be applied only when "counts" are undertaken with reference to a general theory of the communication process. In this sense, "content analysis" is quite recent.

The literary historians have occasionally been stimulated by the methods of cryptography, and they have also made direct contributions to the subject. One example of the influence of this art is Edith Rickert, long associated with J. M. Manly in Chaucerian research, who worked in the "Black Chamber" during World War I, and subsequently devised new ways of studying style: *New Methods for the Study of Literature*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1926. A brief example of differences in the handling of political material by different authors is revealed by a simple study of Scipio's alleged speech to the mutineers in 206 B.C. In Polybius "The speech contains 520 words, in which pronouns or verbal forms of the first person singular occur 14 times—i.e., once in every 37 words. In Livy the speech occupies about 1025 words, and there are no less than 64 occurrences of *ego* or *meus* or verbs in the first person singular—i.e., one word in every 16—a frequency of more than double." (R. S. Conway, *The Portrait of a Roman Gentleman*, from *Livy*, *Bull. of the John Rylands Library*, Manchester, 7 (1922-23: 8-22.)

An absorbing mystery story has been written in which detection depends upon content analysis and engineering: Brett Rutledge (pseud. of Elliott Paul), *The Death of Lord Haw Haw*, Random House, New York, 1940. On certain problems see Wladimir Eliasberg, "Linguistics and Political Criminology," *Journal of Criminal Psychopathology*, 5 (1944): 769-774.

<sup>16</sup> Hypotheses or assumptions about skill have been stated or implied in quantitative studies of many channels of expression. Special attention has been given to oratory, from this point of view, and especially to such quantifiable characteristics as length of sentence. The language of Rufus Choate so greatly impressed his contemporaries that the chief justice of the highest court in Massachusetts, Joseph Neilson, was among those who gave it special study (*Memoirs of Rufus Choate*, Houghton, Mifflin, 1884). Choate was given to long sentences, averaging no fewer than 37 words in one of his most famous cases. Nearly an eighth of all his sentences, in this instance, contained more than 80 words. Consult John W. Black, "Rufus Choate," in *A History and Criticism of American Public Address*, prepared under the auspices of The National Association of Teachers of Speech, William Norwood Brigance, Editor, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1943. Vol. 1, pp. 455-458. More technical investigations are conducted by modern specialists on public speaking. Howard L. Runion, for example, concentrated on fifty speeches by Woodrow Wilson, and counted many features, including the use of figures of speech. (Unpublished dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1932. For more detail see Dayton David McKean, "Woodrow Wilson," in *op. cit.* Vol. 2, pp. 968-992, Brigance, editor.) It is perhaps unnecessary to remark that studies of classical orators are researches into the style of classical historians. See, for instance, Grover Cleveland Kenyan, *Antithesis in the Speeches of Greek Historians*, University of Chicago Libraries, Chicago 1941.

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<sup>17</sup> See Harold Harper's, New Yo



ing factors are strictly comparable. The simple fact that the Nazis won out in Germany against the Socialists and other parties does not necessarily warrant the conclusion that the Nazis were more skillful propagandists than their antagonists. Or the failure of the French to hold out against the Germans longer in 1940 was not necessarily because French propagandists were lacking in skill. The "skill" factor can be separated from the others only when a very comprehensive view can be gained of the context. Did the responsible heads of state choose the most suitable personnel to conduct propaganda operations? Were the most effective symbols chosen? The most useful media? In each case, the question must be answered with reference to alternatives available in the original situation.

That content analysis has a direct bearing on the evaluation of skill is evident, since such methods introduce a degree of precise description at many points in the propaganda process. Directives can be described in detail; so, too, can material released through the propaganda agencies and disseminated through various media controlled by, or beyond the control of, the propagandist. Indeed, as we pointed out in our analysis of the attention factor in world politics,<sup>17</sup> every link in the chain of communication can be described when suitable methods are used; quantitative procedures reduce the margin of uncertainty in the basic data. (There is, of course, no implication that non-quantitative methods should be dropped. On the contrary, there is need of more systematic theory and of more luminous "hunches" if the full potentialities of precision are to be realized in practice. As the history of quantification shows [in economics, for instance], there is never-ending, fruitful interplay between theory, hunch, impression and precision.)

A fourth contribution relates not to policy as a whole, but to the special objectives of humane politics. The aim of humane politics is a commonwealth in which the dignity of man is accepted in theory and fact. Whatever *improves our understanding of attitude* is a potential instrument of humane politics. Up to the present, physical science has not provided us with means of penetrating the skull of a human being and directly reading off his experiences. Hence, we are compelled to rely upon indirect means of piercing the wall that separates us from him. Words provide us with clues, but we hesitate to take all phrases at their face value. Apart from deliberate duplicity, language has shortcomings as a vehicle for the transmission of thought and feeling. It is important to recognize that we obtain insight into the world of the other person when we are fully acquainted with what has come to his attention. Certainly the world of the country boy is full of the sights and smells and sounds of nature. The city boy, on

<sup>17</sup> See Harold D. Lasswell in Lyman Bryson (ed.) *The Communication of Ideas*, Harper's, New York, 1948, Chapters IV and XV.

the other hand, lives in a labyrinth of streets, buildings, vehicles and crowds. A Chinese youth of good family has his ancestors continually thrust upon his notice; an American youth may vaguely recall his grandparents. The son of an English ruling family may be reared on the anecdotes of centuries of imperial history, while the son of an American business man recalls that there was a Revolution and that Bunker Hill had something to do with it.

The dominant political symbols of an epoch provide part of the common experience of millions of men. There is some fascination in the thought of how many human beings are bound together by a thread no more substantial than the resonance of a name or the clang of a slogan. In war, men suffer pain, hunger, sorrow; the specific source of pain, the specific sensation of one's specific object of sorrow, may be very private. In contrast, the key symbol enters directly into the focus of all men and provides an element of common experience.<sup>18</sup>

It is obvious that a complete survey of mass attention will go far beyond the press, the broadcast or the film. It will cover every medium of mass communication. Further, a complete survey would concentrate upon the

<sup>18</sup> The use of key symbols in Quantitative analysis of comparative literature is exemplified by Josephine Miles, "Some Major Poetic Words," *Essays and Studies* (by members of the Department of English, University of California), University of California Publications in English, Vol. XIV, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1943, pp. 233-239. "... the trend of change through five hundred years of main consistencies may be justly observed, and may be summarized in these three ways: First, in terms of parts of speech, it may be said that all the verbs to be stressed by more than one poet were established by Donne or sooner; the adjectives, by Burns, or sooner; the last noun, not until Poe. Second, in terms of new subject matter, the direction is clear from *making* to *thinking*, from *good* and *great* to *high* and *sweet* and *wild*, and from *heaven* and *man* to *soul* and *heart*, to *eye* and *hand*, and then to *day*, *sun*, *dream*, *night*; it is the direction from action to thought, and from conceived to sensed. Third, in terms of contrast between first and last, the prevailing strength of the three main words, *man*, *love*, and *see*, stands out, mainly the simple verbs are lost, and *heart*, *day*, and *night* are the fresher forces. These three views, as we have seen, add up strongly to one: the view of a general stability in the language of major English poetry, tempered by the shift, gradual in all save Collins, from action and concept toward feeling and sensing."

Expertly conducted studies in expressive media other than literature can throw a light on the changing outlook of peoples. The ruling classes of Delft, for instance, early retired from the brewing industry to live upon investments in the East India Company, and remained retired generation after generation. As they shrank from all forms of commercial activity, no other outgoing mode of life attracted them. Max Eisler has been able to demonstrate a remarkable parallel between Delft's paintings and the quietism of Delft life. First, they found landscapes too breezy and, withdrawing indoors, bought church interiors. Presently these seemed too expansive, and they took to cozy home interiors. Vermeer was the culminating artist in this development, and we see in his paintings the citizens of Delft in unvarying sunshine lounging at table, staring at their reflections in a mirror, or at their jewels; sometimes they have passed from lethargy to sleep. And in these paintings the walls are seen coming closer and closer. Year by year, the world of the Delft rentiers grows narrower and narrower, though always in perpetual sunshine (Max Eisler, *Alt-Delft*, Vienna, 1923. Put in perspective by Miriam Beard, *A History of the Business Man*, Macmillan, New York, 1938, p. 306.)

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most active decision-makers, disclosing the milieu of the heads of states, the chiefs of staff, diplomats and all other groups. An exhaustive inventory would describe the entire intelligence process.<sup>19</sup>

Why, then, be quantitative about communication? Because of the scientific and policy gains that can come of it. The social process is one of *collaboration* and *communication*; and quantitative methods have already demonstrated their usefulness in dealing with the former. Further understanding and control depend upon equalizing our skill in relation to both.

<sup>19</sup> Special studies eventually to be made public have been completed by some of our associates in the World Attention Survey: Professor Richard Burks, Wayne University; Dr. Heinz H. F. Eulau; Dr. Bruno Foa, formerly University of Turin; Doris Lewis; Dean James J. Robbins, American University; Professor David N. Rowe, Yale University; Professor Douglas Waples, University of Chicago.